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AUTHOR	Stark, Giovanna
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ABSTRACT

The Child Development Programs Advisory Committee has completed a 1-year grant from the Department of Health and Human Services to educate day care consumers about guidelines for locating quality day care for infants and children. The project was conducted in three selected areas: urban, rural-migrant, and suburban. Two educational components were used to carry out project objectives. First, professional education focused on inservice training for health practitioners. Second, consumer education provided information to parents in maternity wards and clinics. Project activities to disseminate information on infant and child care included (1) inservice training for health educators, professionals, and pediatric nurse practitioners; (2) videocassette presentations for new parents in hospitals and clinics; (3) printed information; and (4) local meetings. Through these activities, the project established a link between parents of newborn infants and community child care resources. (The executive summary of the project is appended.) (Author/BJD)

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There Is A Choice:

Choosing Good Infant and Child Day Care

#90PD86516/01

Final Report and Executive Summary.

State of California

Child Development Programs Advisory Committee

March 27, 1984

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Giovanna Stark
915 Capitol Mall, Room 250
Sacramento, CA 95814
(916) 322-8181

Final Report

Statement of Need

Like many other states, California has faced several problems in recent years which have left an urgent need for consumer education in day care. The number of infants and children in day care arrangements has increased significantly, yet the expansion of day care services has not kept up with the need for care. Of the family day care homes available, only about half are licensed. Even when facilities are licensed, state resources have not been sufficient to insure meaningful enforcement of standards. In addition, the trend for deregulation continues to increase and there is some concern that in future years, family day care homes may not be licensed. Although California's Resource and Referral Agencies (R and R) are there to work with consumers and providers, the need to reach more parents, especially new parents, has remained constant.

Background

The Child Development Programs Advisory Committee (previously known as the Governor's Advisory Committee) was awarded a $72,000 grant to increase consumer awareness of how to find and select quality day care for infants and children.

The one-year demonstration project, which began October 1, 1982, was funded by the Department of Health and Human Services, and operated in three areas of California - Riverside, Alameda and Yolo counties. The counties represent urban, suburban and rural migrant communities.

Methods

To meet its goals, the Committee used both consumer education and pro-

fessional education. The consumer education component was intended primarily to reach parents in maternity wards and clinics to provide them with information about choosing child care. Two separate cassettes were produced, one in English, the other in Spanish, and were made available for new parents to see in hospitals and clinics selected within the three areas. The video presentations inform parents about desirable standards for day care centers and family day care homes, and encourage them to take a more active role in choosing child care through their own greater involvement and participation in reviewing programs. Copies were made of the videos to provide free rental to interested groups throughout California. In addition, a synchronized slide-tape presentation specifically developed for the migrant community is available for use in California's migrant community. Copies of the video are also available for purchase.

Although the media presentations are expected to give parents a broad overview of child care, local information is being provided by nurse practitioners who may be already involved in giving in-hospital presentations to new mothers and through resource and referral staff statewide. Through the training sessions, parents will have a better understanding of services available through their local R and R agency and of the different types of child care available in their communities.

Response for the videos has been strong. It has had the overwhelming support of the American Academy of Pediatricians, local chapters of the Red Cross, various hospitals and clinics, the community college system, the Welfare Directors Association, school districts, and other community organizations.

Recently we were informed that the Junior League of San Francisco has offered to design, print and distribute promotional material to describe the video's availability.

Unfortunately, the requests to borrow the video already outnumber the copies available. We are working with several sources in an attempt to find funds for additional copies.

Three inservice workshops were held with R and R staff providing training to health educators, pediatric nurse practitioners and other health professionals. The workshops varied within the pilot counties according to local community needs. Not only did the workshops provide a forum for sharing child care information, but have established a needed link between existing resources, the health community and the local R and R. As a result of Bananas' inservice training in Alameda County, physicians at Children's Hospital have formed a subcommittee on ill children in child care settings.

To strengthen the video presentations and training sessions, the Committee has prepared a child care brochure specifically designed for new parents. The brochure suggests possible sources for finding child care and lists guidelines to follow in selecting quality care. The State Printer will be printing the brochure. Unfortunately, because of their hiring freeze, they have not been able to complete production. We anticipate the brochure will be available by the end of April. Once completed, the brochure will be distributed through the R and R's, OB clinics and maternity wards, community colleges and community organizations such as the YWCA, Red Cross, and single parent groups.

Together, the project activities should form a long-term program of consumer education on selecting quality infant and child care, and on reaching parents systematically by linking them to parenting resources.

Recommendations

From the enthusiastic response the video has received from other states as well as California, we recommend that it be distributed nationwide.

Our Committee purposely omitted specific references to California regulations in the script of both the video and the pamphlet so that they can be used in other states with different licensing policies and to ensure that the information would not become obsolete should our state's policy change.

The Committee strongly recommends, since copies of the video can be reproduced inexpensively, that the Department of Health and Human Services have 200 copies made and distributed: two to each state's Department of Education for use in their community colleges and teen and adult parenting classes and two to each state's Department of Social Services for use by community organizations, hospitals and clinics.

Total cost for distributing these 200 copies would be approximately $4,000.00.

State of California

CHILD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS
ADVISORY COMMITTEE

915 Capitol Mall, Room 250
Sacramento, California 95814
(916) 322-8181

Executive Summary

THERE IS A CHOICE: Choosing Good Infant and Child Day Care

The Governor's Advisory Committee completed a one-year grant from the Department of Health and Human Services to educate day care consumers on guidelines for locating quality day care for infants and children. The project was carried out in three selected areas (urban, rural-migrant, and suburban). Resource and Referral agencies selected to assist with the project include: Child Action of Yolo County, Bananas of Alameda County, and the Riverside County Superintendent of Schools. The Regional Rural Health Program, Inc. in Yolo County assisted the GAC with the rural/migrant component of the program.

Two educational strategies were used to carry out project objectives: professional education and consumer education. The professional education component focused on inservice training for health practitioners. The consumer education component focused on reaching parents in maternity wards and clinics to provide them with information about choosing child care.

Some of the project activities included:

1. Inservice training on infant and child day care for pediatric nurse practitioners who have contact with parents and are often involved in giving presentations in maternity wards.

2. Inservice training on infant and child day care for pediatricians who are often asked by parents about day care.

3. Video cassette presentations on where to find and how to select good day care for infants and children to be used through closed circuit TV's in maternity wards and OB clinics.

4. Printed information on day care made available to parents by:

   a. providing pediatricians with brochures

   b. including materials in the packet of information given to new parents

c. developing and distributing a child care brochure designed for new parents

5. Mailings to new parents 4 to 6 weeks after a child's birth summarizing what to look for in day care and inviting parents to attend a local meeting at their area's Resource and Referral Services agency. The meetings focused on finding quality care as well as including a discussion on ways an interested parent can become a day care provider.

Through these five activities, the project established a link currently missing between parents of newborn infants and each community's child care resources. This link by way of the health care system, will benefit parents and health professionals as well.

The pilot project has proven successful. The video cassette has been well received in other states as well as California. Because of the need, we expect it will continue to be in demand. Our Committee recommends that the video material developed through this grant be distributed nationwide. Since copies of the video can be reproduced inexpensively, we suggest the Department of Health and Human Services distribute 2 copies to each state's Department of Education and Department of Social Services. The video would then be available to community colleges, teen and adult parenting classes, community organizations and hospitals and clinics. Total cost for distributing the video would be approximately $4,000.00.